

GULF HYPOXIA REASSESSMENT – COORDINATED DELIVERY OF ADVANCING NUTRIENTS SCIENCE AND DATA TO THE GULF STATES**Needs and opportunities identified by Gulf States in Nutrient Reduction White Paper:**

- “A comprehensive and coordinated effort among federal, state and local entities to evaluate, and prioritize nutrient issues, and the development of strategies and the attaining of resources to reduce excess nutrients entering coastal waters are of the utmost importance. Resources are needed to expand monitoring efforts, as well as to increase technical and continual financial assistance.”
- “Tools to better understand the relationship between watershed land uses and the resulting nutrient problem in coastal waters: This will help ensure the development of technically-rigorous TMDLs and coast-effective nutrient load reduction strategies.”
- “The Gulf states would benefit from added assistance from the federal government in their attempts to address nutrient loading issues.”

Federal Response: The Federal Workgroup proposes coordinated delivery to the Gulf States of continually advancing nutrients science and data tools and resources developed through the 2005 Gulf Hypoxia Science Reassessment.

In 2005, the National Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Nutrient Watershed (Hypoxia) Task Force will initiate the first of three scheduled five-year science reassessments related to Mississippi River Basin-based nutrients and their impacts on the northern Gulf of Mexico. The reassessment will likely result in a base of focused science (monitoring and modeling) and data tools significantly improved over those tools used to formulate the original assessment in 1999. This proposal would establish, through coordination by the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program Office, a strategic framework upon which to ensure that the Gulf States are presented with the maximum understanding and access to the analytical data, methods, protocols and techniques used to generate the reassessment. It is perceived that the tools developed during the reassessment would prove to be invaluable additions to the Gulf States' evolving nutrient management programs. The tools used to generate the Gulf Hypoxia Reassessment should have broad applicability to support state efforts to develop appropriate nutrient criteria and standards in coastal waters throughout the region.

The EPA Gulf of Mexico Program Office would co-host, with the National Hypoxia Task Force, a series of regional workshops beginning in early fiscal year 2006, to initiate technology transfer to the Gulf States. These workshops will ensure data quality assurance and applicability.

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Federal Workgroup Co-lead: EPA, NOAA, DOI/USGS, ACOE

Other partners: USDA (Balance of the National Task Force Federal Leadership), DOJ, OSTP

This Federal Response Proposal represents an initial project idea from the 13 agencies represented on the Federal Workgroup, in response to the Gulf State Alliance white papers; it is meant to stimulate discussion, among the Gulf State Alliance and the Federal Workgroup, as they work toward the development of a draft Gulf Plan of Action. Implementation of this project idea is subject to further evaluation and the availability of funding.